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Message Text

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TO AMEMBASSY KABUL IMMEDIATE
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AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY PARIS
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AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY BONN

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E.O. 11652: XGDS (1)(3)

TAGS:

SUBJECT: ASSISTANT SECRETARY SAUNDER'S MEETING WITH AFGHAN
FOREIGN MINISTER HAFIZULLAH AMIN JUNE 5

SUMMARY: ASSISTANT SECRETARY SAUNDERS (NEA) AND AFGHAN
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FOREIGN MINISTER AMIN HAD 75 MINUTE MEETING IN NEW YORK ON
JUNE 5. AMIN SAID AFGHANISTAN WANTS TO HAVE FRIENDLY
RELATIONS WITH US AND DESCRIBED BACKGROUND OF COUP AND HOW
NEW GOVERNMENT FUNCTIONS. SAUNDERS SAID US DESIRES TO HELP
AFGHANISTAN MAINTAIN ITS INDEPENDENCE AND WANTS TO WORK
WITH NEW GOVERNMENT. HUMAN RIGHTS, GOALS OF NEW GOVERN-
MENT AND REGIONAL SITUATION WERE ALSO DISCUSSED. (COMMENT:
WE BELIEVE MEETING WAS USEFUL. AMIN WAS RESERVED AND SPOKE
SOFTLY BUT WITH CONVICTION. END SUMMARY)

1. ASSISTANT SECRETARY SAUNDERS ACCOMPANIED BY MICHAEL

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HORNBLOW (NEA/PAB) CALLED ON AMIN IN HIS SUITE AT THE WALDORF. AMIN WAS ALONE DURING THE 75 MINUTE MEETING.

2. IN RESPONSE TO QUESTIONS FROM SAUNDERS AMIN MADE THE FOLLOWING POINTS:

-- AFGHANISTAN WANTS TO HAVE FRIENDLY RELATIONS WITH THE US.

-- DUE TO THE "DESPOTISM" AND "TYRANNY" OF THE ONE FAMILY RULE DURING THE PAST FIFTY YEARS, AFGHANISTAN TODAY IS PROBABLY THE MOST BACKWARD COUNTRY IN THE WORLD. THE PEOPLE ARE POOR AND ILLITERATE AND THEIR LIVING CONDITIONS ARE TERRIBLE. YET THE COUNTRY DOES HAVE SOME NATURAL RESOURCES AND IS LOCATED AT A CROSSROADS. THE STANDARD OF LIVING CAN BE IMPROVED AND TOURISM CAN BE PROMOTED.

-- THIRTEEN YEARS AGO A NEW CONSTITUTION WAS PROMULGATED WHICH ALLOWED POLITICAL PARTIES. AMIN RETURNED FROM THE US AT THAT TIME AND HELPED FOUND THE PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC PARTY.

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-- IN THE INTERVENING YEARS THE PARTY WORKED WITH ARMY AND THE PEOPLE AND GRADUALLY BUILT UP STRENGTH. THEY DID NOT WISH TO START A REVOLUTION AT THIS TIME AND WOULD HAVE PREFERRED A PEACEFUL CHANGE AT A LATER TIME. DAOUD, HOWEVER, WAS A PROUD PERSON WHO WANTED NO OPPOSITION. WHEN KHAIBAR WAS KILLED 60,000-100,000 PEOPLE MARCHED IN THE FUNERAL PROCESSION. DAOUD WAS ALARMED BY THIS SHOW OF STRENGTH AND ATTACKED THE PDP AND ARRESTED ITS LEADERS.

-- AMIN THOUGH UNDER HOUSE ARREST MADE THE NECESSARY ARRANGEMENTS AND PLANNING FOR THE COUP. THE PEOPLE COOPERATED. THE ONLY FIGHTING WAS BETWEEN THE PALACE GUARD AND THE ARMY. THERE WAS NO FIGHTING IN THE PROVINCES EXCEPT FOR ONE GENERAL WHO RESISTED IN JALALLABAD. DAOUD WAS KILLED THE MORNING OF APRIL 28 WHEN HE RESISTED ARREST.

-- THE NEW GOVERNMENT IS RECEIVING WIDESPREAD AND WARM SUPPORT FROM THE PEOPLE. THE INTELLECTUALS HAVE INFORMED THE NEW LEADERS THAT THEY ARE WILLING TO PARTICIPATE AND HELP.

-- ALL MAJOR DECISIONS ARE MADE BY THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE OF THE PARTY. THE THREE MAIN GROUPS OF THE DRA ARE THE PARTY CENTRAL COMMITTEE (29 MEMBERS), THE REVOLUTIONARY COUNCIL (37 MEMBERS) AND THE GOVERNMENT ITSELF (19 MEMBERS

INCLUDING TARAKI). ALL MEMBERS OF THE REVOLUTIONARY

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COUNCIL AND THE CABINET ARE MEMBERS OF THE PARTY. IN ADDITION ALL CABINET MEMBERS ARE ALSO MEMBERS OF THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE.

3. IN MAKING INITIAL PRESENTATION SAUNDERS MADE FOLLOWING POINTS:

-- SINCE AMIN LEFT COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY IN THE EARLY 60'S
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OUR THINKING HAS EVOLVED. WE NOW RECOGNIZE THAT THERE IS A PLURALISTIC WORLD AND WE WANT TO WORK WITH COUNTRIES WHO WANT OUR FRIENDSHIP AND WANT TO WORK WITH US. WE ARE PARTICULARLY DESIROUS THAT EACH OF THOSE COUNTRIES ARE ABLE TO HAVE THEIR OWN INDEPENDENCE FREE FROM INTIMIDATION BY OTHER MEMBERS OF THE WORLD SOCIETY.

-- SINCE 1950 THE US HAS WORKED CLOSELY WITH THE AFGHANS TO SUPPORT THEIR INDEPENDENCE. WE RECOGNIZE THAT AFGHANISTAN IS IN A SPECIAL SITUATION BECAUSE OF ITS BORDER WITH THE USSR. FOR ITS OWN SAKE WE WOULD NOT WANT AFGHANISTAN TO COMPROMISE ITS INDEPENDENCE TO THE SOVIETS. WE CONTINUE TO FEEL STRONGLY ABOUT THE IMPORTANCE OF AFGHAN INDEPENDENCE.

-- WE CAN UNDERSTAND HOW THE KIND OF REVOLUTION DESCRIBED BY AMIN COULD GROW UP WITHIN AFGHANISTAN AND HOW THE NEW GOVERNMENT CAN BE FULLY DEDICATED TO MAINTAINING AFGHAN INDEPENDENCE. THE US IS WILLING TO WORK CLOSELY WITH THE NEW GOVERNMENT OF AFGHANISTAN IF THE DRA SO WISHES.

-- HOWEVER AMIN SHOULD ALSO REALIZE THAT THERE WILL STILL BE SOME IN THE US WHO WILL ASK IF THE NEW GOVERNMENT IS COMMUNIST AND HAS BECOME AN INSTRUMENT OF THE SOVIET UNION. IN THIS CONNECTION, THE FOREIGN MINISTER SHOULD BE AWARE THAT THERE IS LEGISLATION WHICH PROHIBITS US ECONO-MIC ASSISTANCE TO COMMUNIST COUNTRIES. (COMMENT: IN MAKING THIS POINT SAUNDERS EMPHASIZED HE WAS NOT MAKING A THREAT BUT WAS JUST PROVIDING INFORMATION FOR THE FM'S BACKGROUND. END COMMENT)

-- THE FOREIGN MINISTER SHOULD ALSO BE AWARE OF OTHER NEW TRENDS IN OUR FOREIGN POLICY. THE US NOW TENDS TO LOOK AT
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INDIVIDUAL SUBJECTS SUCH AS NARCOTICS AND HUMAN RIGHTS CONDITIONS IN FORMULATING ITS FOREIGN POLICY. FOR EXAMPLE THERE IS LEGISLATION WHICH PROHIBITS THE PROVISION OF ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE TO COUNTRIES WHO ARE GROSS AND CONSISTENT VIOLATORS OF HUMAN RIGHTS. (COMMENT: SAUNDERS

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AGAIN IN MAKING ABOVE POINT EMPHASIZED THAT HE WAS ONLY POINTING OUT SOME OF THE COMPLICATIONS OF CONDUCTING

FOREIGN POLICY FROM OUR POINT OF VIEW AND WAS NOT MAKING A THREAT. END COMMENT)

-- WE HOPE WE CAN KEEP ALL OF THESE CONCERNS IN BALANCE. WE HAVE INSTRUCTED AMBASSADOR ELIOT TO BEGIN DISCUSSIONS WITH YOUR GOVERNMENT ON HOW WE CAN PROCEED WITH OUR AID PROGRAMS. THE OBJECTIVES OF OUR AID PROGRAMS ARE CONSISTENT WITH THE SOCIAL OBJECTIVES OF THE DRA-- TO MEET BASIC HUMAN NEEDS.

4. IN RESPONDING AMIN STRESSED THAT THE AFGHAN PEOPLE LOVE THEIR INDEPENDENCE AND WILL NEVER SURRENDER IT. AMIN SAID THE DRA HAS ADOPTED A NON-ALIGNED POLICY AND WANTS TO HAVE GOOD RELATIONS WITH ITS NEIGHBORS AND WITH THOSE COUNTRIES WHO ARE WILLING TO PROVIDE UNCONDITIONAL ASSISTANCE. THE NEW GOVERNMENT HAS GOOD RELATIONS WITH THE USSR BUT THAT DOES NOT MEAN THEY WILL DEVIATE FROM THEIR MAIN POLICY OF NON-ALIGNMENT.

5. AMIN THEN NOTED THAT "REACTIONARY CIRCLES" ARE INSTIGATING TROUBLE IN THE PROVINCES. THEY ARE USING FALSE PROPAGANDA TO SUGGEST THAT AFGHANISTAN IS LEANING TOWARD THE SOVIET UNION.

6. IN CONCLUDING HIS RESPONSE AMIN SAID THAT GOVERNMENT WAS NOT COMMUNIST BUT WAS DIFFERENT FROM THE PREVIOUS GOVERNMENT. THE NEW GOVERNMENT WISHES TO "TAKE PROGRESSIVE STEPS TO SHORTEN THE WAY TO PROGRESS "AND WANTS
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TO HAVE LAND REFORM, IMPROVE THE AGARIAN SITUATION, INCREASE LAND PRODUCTIVITY AND INCREASE INDUSTRIAL PRODUCTION. AMIN STRESSED THAT THE NEW REGIME SHOULD BE JUDGED BY ITS ACTIONS.

7. SAUNDERS MENTIONED THAT HE HAD TWO THOUGHTS HE WANTED TO SHARE WITH THE FOREIGN MINISTER.

-- THERE ARE SOME PEOPLE IN THE US WHO FEEL THAT THE SOVIETS WILL WISH TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THE REVOLUTION FOR THEIR OWN PURPOSES AND WILL USE THEIR PRESENCE IN AFGHANISTAN TO EXTEND THEIR POSITION INTO PAKISTAN AND IRAN. IN THIS CONNECTION PEOPLE HAVE BEEN WATCHING WHAT THE SOVIETS HAVE DONE IN AFGHANISTAN SINCE THE REVOLUTION.

-- THERE ARE TWO WAYS OF CONDUCTING A REVOLUTION SUCH AS THE ONE DESCRIBED BY THE FOREIGN MINISTER. FOR EXAMPLE THE US FULLY SUPPORTS SUCH GOALS AS LAND REFORM AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF RURAL AREAS. BUT WHAT METHODS WILL BE USED

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TO ACHIEVE THESE GOALS? ONE METHOD IS THE SOVIET BRAND OF MARXIST-LENINISM WHICH IS GODLESS AND DONE WITHOUT REGARD FOR THE HUMANS INVOLVED. THE OTHER METHOD WAS TO MOVE TOWARD THESE GOALS WITH A DUE REGARD FOR HIGHER VALUES AND HUMAN RIGHTS. THE US ALSO WAS A REVOLUTIONARY COUNTRY AND BEING REVOLUTIONARY IS NOT A BAD THING.

8. IN RESPONSE AMIN SAID IT WAS NOT ADVISABLE TO DEAL "BRUTALLY" WITH THE PEOPLE OF AFGHANISTAN. THERE IS WIDE BASED SUPPORT FOR THE PRESENT GOVERNMENT. THE METHODS OF ACHIEVING THE REVOLUTIONARY GOALS WILL BE PECULIAR TO AFGHANISTAN DUE TO THE PECULIARITIES OF AFGHAN SOCIETY.

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9. SAUNDERS ASKED IF AMIN WAS SAYING THAT THE NEW GOVERNMENT PLANNED TO PROCEED ON A REVOLUTIONARY CAUSE FOR THE BENEFIT OF THE PEOPLE OF AFGHANISTAN IN A WAY WHICH WOULD RESPECT THE BASIC HUMAN, LEGAL, SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC RIGHTS OF ITS PEOPLE. IF THIS IS THE CASE THE US COULD WORK WITH THIS KIND OF REVOLUTION.

10. AMIN NODDED AND SAID "WE WON'T LET THE FEUDAL LORDS RUN THE COUNTRY ANYMORE". THEY ACTED LIKE "GODS". THEY WERE THE "MOST TERRIBLE MINDED PEOPLE IN THE WORLD". WE WON'T LET THEM "EXPLOIT THE POOR PEASANTS" ANYMORE. THE STEPS WE WILL TAKE WON'T BE LIKED "BY SOME ELEMENTS IN IRAN AND PAKISTAN AND WILL BE MISINTERPRETED". WE WILL NOT KILL THE FEUDAL LANDLORDS OR THROW THEM IN PRISON. IT WILL BE DONE IN AN AFGHAN WAY JUST FOR THE PEOPLE OF AFGHANISTAN.

11. SAUNDERS ASKED WHAT WOULD HAPPEN TO THE FEUDAL LANDLORDS. AMIN SAID THEY SHOULD "WORK FOR THEIR COUNTRY" AND SHOULD NOT BE ALLOWED TO SIT IN THE CITY AND EARN MONEY FROM THEIR PEASANTS. AMIN ADDED THAT LAND REFORM WOULD BE POPULAR IN TRIBAL AREAS. HE SAID THE TRIBAL AREAS WOULD BE PEACEFUL AS LONG AS THERE IS NO INTERFERENCE FROM "OUTSIDE ANTI-PROGRESSIVE ELEMENTS WHO USE RELIGIOUS FEELINGS FOR THEIR OWN PURPOSES".

12. SAUNDERS ASKED WHAT WILL HAPPEN TO THOSE OFFICIALS FROM THE OLD REGIME WHO ARE IN PRISON. AMIN SAID SOME HAD LEFT THE COUNTRY AND A "VERY FEW" ARE IN PRISON. THERE ARE ALSO A FEW WOMEN AND CHILDREN IN PROTECTIVE CUSTODY. AMIN SAID IF THERE IS ANYBODY WILLING TO ACCEPT RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE SAFETY AND WELL BEING OF THESE WOMEN AND CHILDREN, THEY COULD BE RELEASED. AMIN ADDED THAT MEMBERS OF THE FORMER GOVERNMENT NOW IN PRISON WOULD BE TRIED.

13. SAUNDERS ASKED WHY JOURNALISTS AND OTHERS USED WORD

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"COMMUNIST" TO DESCRIBE NEW AFGHAN GOVERNMENT? AMIN SAID THIS WORD HAD FORMERLY BEEN USED TO DESCRIBE NASSER, NEHRU, SADAT, SUKARNO, MOSSEDEQ AND OTHERS AND WAS OFTEN LOOSELY USED.

14. SAUNDERS ASKED HOW DID THE PEOPLE REGARD THE PARTY BEFORE THE REVOLUTION? AMIN SAID THE PARTY HAD BEEN POPULAR WITH THE PEOPLE AND THERE HAD BEEN AN EFFECTIVE REPRESENTATIVE OF THE PARTY IN EVERY VILLAGE. HOWEVER SOME "FANATIC" MULLAHS USED BY "REACTIONARY" FOREIGN CIRCLES HAD OPPOSED THE PARTY.

15. SAUNDERS ASKED IN VIEW OF THIS LAST POINT HOW DID THE NEW GOVERNMENT SEE ITS RELATIONS WITH PAKISTAN AND IRAN DEVELOPING? AMIN EMPHASIZED THAT HE HAD NOT MEANT THE GOVERNMENTS OF IRAN AND PAKISTAN BUT "IRCLES" WITHIN THOSE COUNTRIES. HE ADDED THAT HIS GOVERNMENT CAN'T FORGET THE PROBLEM WHICH EXISTS BETWEEN AFGHANISTAN AND PAKISTAN BECAUSE PEOPLE STILL LIVE THERE. AMIN SAID HE HOPED THIS PROBLEM COULD BE SOLVED BY NEGOTIATIONS.

16. SAUNDERS SAID THAT ONE OF OUR OBJECTIVES IS TO HAVE STABILITY IN THE REGION AND GOOD RELATIONS BETWEEN ALL THE COUNTRIES OF THE REGION. WHEN THERE IS AN UNSTABLE SITUATION AND TENSIONS RISE, THE SOVIETS MOVE IN.

17. AMIN SAID THAT AFGHANISTAN DISLIKED BEING FORCED TO ASK THE USSR FOR HELP AND THAT THEY WILL "NEVER ATTACK" ANOTHER COUNTRY.

18. SAUNDERS IN CLOSING SAID WE RESPECT THOSE WHO HAVE DIFFERENT VIEWS OF THE WORLD BUT THAT US AND AFGHANISTAN

HAD MANY THINGS IN COMMON AND WE WOULD DEPEND ON OUR AMBASSADOR IN KABUL TO WORK WITH THE NEW GOVERNMENT. AMIN RESPONDED THAT HE WAS "SURE WE CAN DO IT" AND HE HOPED THAT THOSE WHO CLAIM TO BE FRIENDS OF THE US WON'T DO ANYTHING DIFFERENT AND WILL BE "WISE AND HONEST". SAUNDERS REPLIED THAT THE USG MAKES ITS DECISIONS IN WASHINGTON BASED UPON THE OBSERVATIONS OF OUR AMBASSADOR IN KABUL. AMIN IN CLOSING SAID DRA WAS DETERMINED TO KEEP FRIENDLY RELATIONS WITH US. SAUNDERS SAID HE HOPED USG AND DRA COULD WORK TOGETHER ON THAT BASIS.

COMMENT: BELIEVE MEETING WAS HIGHLY USEFUL AND THINK AMIN APPRECIATED SAUNDER'S GESTURE IN COMING UP TO NEW YORK TO MAKE THIS CALL.

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IT IS INTERESTING THAT AMIN CHOSE NOT TO HAVE ANY OTHER AFGHANS PRESENT AT MEETING. HE SEEMED SOMEWHAT RESERVED

AND SOFT SPOKEN YET ALSO VERY SELF ASSURED AND HIS WORDS CARRIED CONVICTION PARTICULARLY WHEN HE TALKED ABOUT THE PREVIOUS REGIME AND THE FEUDAL LANDLORDS. VANCE

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